

BikePark Wales Environmental Statement Vol.1

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Chapter 4: Development Description

March 2019

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Issue date	March 2019	
Drawing status	Final	
Revision		
Author	LH/HA	
Checked by	MF	

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4 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This chapter describes the proposed development that has been assessed in the EIA. It identifies the individual development components, provides a schedule of the construction activities that will be required, and details how the development will operate.

4.1.2 The background to the considered options for the development, and the service provision model, leading to this proposal, is set out in Chapter 5.

4.2 Development Components

4.2.1 The proposed development consists of the following

- 141 parking spaces to be provided for day-to-day use (including motor homes) with 85 in overflow.
- Highway access and pedestrian routes;
- 36 camping pods and 5 chalets;
- Shower and toilet block;
- Natural play and picnic area
- Trail maintenance yard; and
- Associated drainage and landscape infrastructure.

4.2.2 Each of these development components is described below.

Parking and highway access/pedestrian routes

4.2.3 Since opening, BikePark Wales has seen a continual increase in visitor numbers from approximately 47,500 tickets sold in 2013/14 to approximately 75,000 tickets sold in 2017/18. Continued growth is expected, but the mountain bike market is also becoming increasingly competitive

4.2.4 Currently, there is significant number of informal car parking areas throughout the site. In total, there are approximately 150 – 170 car parking spaces currently on-site. However, none of these are formally marked, due to the unbound nature of the surfacing within the site. A one-way vehicle access route is in operation throughout the site, which ensures that conflict between vehicular movements within the site is minimised.

4.2.5 A two-way access drive with a general carriageway width of 5.5m is proposed to serve the motorhome and van parking and pods and lodges. The drive will feature a series of unloading lay-bys close to the pods and lodges.

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- 4.2.6 Where practical, the carriageway width is reduced to c.2.5m at footpath and track crossings and marked by the placing of large boulders. The route of the drive follows an existing track through the woodland approximately north-south as far as the area of scrub where it turns west towards the visitor centre. The drive then runs parallel to the woodland edge towards the proposed toilet block where it joins the existing main access drive.
- 4.2.7 The proposals for additional parking seek to address the increase in visitor numbers that BikePark Wales is currently facing. The pedestrian routes have been carefully designed to reduce conflict with vehicular movements and to ensure a good sense of legibility.
- 4.2.8 The new parking areas and roads will inevitably increase the hard standing area of the site, but care has been taken in the design to integrate the infrastructure into the site landscape, to advocate the use of natural materials that replicate those used for the existing site infrastructure, and to use planting to screen and assimilate the infrastructure.
- 4.2.9 For example, where gradient allows a series of bunds will be constructed between parking bays to reduce the visual impact of vehicles and help integrate the parking spaces into the hillside setting. Furthermore, narrower ridges are proposed within the bays between parking spaces.
- 4.2.10 Both bunds and ridges will be extensively planted with feathered and standard species of trees consisting of birch, alder, rowan and oak all of which flourish locally. Additionally, tree and shrub beds will be established along the bunds and ridges in order to further screen the parking area.
- 4.2.11 Generally, surfaces will be finished in locally sourced self-binding stone. It is proposed that surface drainage will rely primarily on the self-draining nature of the self-binding construction, however, ditch soakways will also be provided to deal with any excess surface water.

Camping pods and chalets

- 4.2.12 Currently, visitors to BikePark Wales rely upon the existing B&B trade for over night accommodation. The proposals include the provision of 36 camping pods and 5 chalets for overnight stay. Given the growth forecasted for the BikePark Wales, it is considered that additional on site accommodation is required to cater for the increased demand, but will also act as a catalyst for a further increase in visitor numbers (particularly families) due to the attraction of on site accommodation. Three different pods of varying size (landpods, camping pods and shepherds huts) will be provided to offer a diverse range of accommodation. The three lodges nearest the proposed van parking area will be accessible by wheelchair.
- 4.2.13 In order to prevent repetition and to contribute to a more organic layout, the proposed accommodation varies in terms of its design, scale and external finishes/features, however each of the accommodation types are considered to be suitable and complementary to a woodland environment.
- 4.2.14 Each of the lodge types will be finished in natural materials. Materials will consist of frey felt pitched roofs with a single ridgeline, natural timber walls with windows on each façade and doors on two facades, and white fascia and barge boards.
- 4.2.15 The Pods will be set on a pad of compacted crushed stone with timber edging. The formation level of the pod will be formed by removing the organic material rich layer from the surface (typically to a suitable sub strata) until a relatively firm topsoil base is reached. The exact location of pods will be

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adjusted on site to minimize damage and loss of trees. The intention is to retain as many trees as possible to reduce impact on the site environment, but a wooded environment is also an important part of the visitor experience.

4.2.16 Lodges 1, 2 and 3 will be supported by timber frames and will be set up to 5m above existing ground level. Lodges 4 and 5 will be set on concrete pad bases. The bases of lodges 4 and 5 are not shown on the sections. The formation level of the concrete pads has been estimated as being a maximum of 600mm below the existing ground level.

4.2.17 Low, topsoil covered subsoil bunds are proposed along part of the northern edge of the woodland between the pods and the access road. Bunds will be planted with native shrub and tree whips. This planting will be reinforced with feathered and standard trees on the bund nearest the lodges.

4.2.18 Lines and groups of native feathered and standard trees are also proposed within the woodland near to lodges and pods and around the woodland edge where lodges are close to the boundary.

4.2.19 The accommodation types and their scale are outlined in the table below:

Table 4.1: Maximum building parameters of proposed accommodation

Accommodation Type	Height	Width	Length
Land pods	3 metres	3 metres	3 metres
Lager pods and toilet pods	2 metres	3 metres	5.2 metres
Shepherds huts	2 metres	6.3 metres	2.6 metres
Lodges	4 metres	15 metres	7 metres

Table 4.1: Maximum building parameters of proposed accommodation

Toilet and shower block

4.2.20 Given the increase in visitor numbers BikePark Wales has and will be experiencing, additional shower and toilet facilities are required.

4.2.21 The proposed shower block has been located so that is viewed within the context of the site's existing built environment. Its size has been minimized to the operational requirements, and the materials replicate that of the accommodation and the existing center building.

4.2.22 The building will require the removal of three mature trees that are in poor health. Ground modeling will also be required.

4.2.23 Details of the scale of the building can be viewed in the table below:

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Structure	Height	Width	Length
Shower and toilet block	3 metres	12.7 metres	3.6 metres

Table 4.2: Maximum building parameters of shower and toilet block

Natural play and picnic area

- 4.2.24 One of the main aims of the development is to ensure that BikePark Wales can enter the family market and remain competitive. Therefore a small natural playground is proposed as a part of the development, which will be located in close proximity to the proposed accommodation. Play structures and features will in the main be bespoke and primarily constructed using timber, stone and ground modeling.
- 4.2.25 The proposed play area will predominately comprise a mixture of bespoke play features in natural timber, rope and stone designed to provide unsupervised fun for a range of ages and abilities. The surfacing will be in sand, gravel and chipped bark.

Trail maintenance yard

- 4.2.26 As the scale of the trail facilities at BikePark Wales has grown, so has the size of the team and the tools required to maintain them. Currently, trail plant is frequently parked in the customer car park, which is both unsightly and difficult as it takes up precious parking spaces. Therefore, the aim for BikePark Wales is to create a yard for storage of trail maintenance plant that is hidden from the public eye behind the existing building and sheltered by the bank behind the building to the west. Furthermore, the yard will also be screened by significant tree and shrub planting meaning that it would not be seen from long distance views.

Foul water

- 4.2.27 A new foul drainage system (separate from that serving the existing and proposed buildings around the visitor centre) will be constructed to serve the proposed shepherd's huts, toilet pods and lodges and will connect to a new underground foul water proprietary cesspit tank adjacent to the van parking area. The tank will discharge its liquor to ground via herringbone pipes.
- 4.2.28 Foul drainage trenches will be run through the woodland area beneath the footpath network where practical. Surface water drainage from lodge roofs is shown as connecting with 3 new soakaways within the woodland immediately adjacent to the buildings.

Surface water

- 4.2.29 The proposed shower block building will discharge to ground via a swale/soakaway system together with external areas, such that there is no increase in surface water run off. The new car park area and motorhome area will be constructed of open bound gravel and stone surfacing allowing all surface

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water run off to soakaway, together with the use of open swales and soakaways between car parking areas to collect excess run off that has not soaked away following heavy rainfall periods.

4.2.30 The camping pods will all discharge direct to ground at surface level to reduce and limit any excavations for soakaways in the woodland area to protect any tree root system. Due to the nature and size of the camping pods there will be no increase in surface water run off for this zone.

4.2.31 The new proposed lodges will be designed to have their own individual soakaway/swales, thus conforming to the SUDS Guidelines with all new footpaths and road ways having a natural run off/soakaway as the existing road network.

4.2.32 All new roads and footpaths to be constructed in open bound stone based macadam which allows percolation, with any excess rain fall being taken by swales and ultimately discharging to ground.

4.3 Construction Phase

Construction hours

4.3.1 Construction hours will predominantly be Monday to Friday (08:00-18:00). Where weekend works are required they will be undertaken on Sat (08:00-13:00). No construction activities are anticipated on a Sunday. The hours of construction will be agreed in time via a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Construction activities

4.3.2 The exact construction method for the proposed development is not known. However, the below are considered to be the likely activities for each of the development components:

Infrastructure	Construction Actions
Parking plateaus	- The parking plateaus will be constructed using large scale excavators and blade machines to reduce the levels from existing to approximately 400-600mm in depth to form the proposed formation levels of the car parking. - Excess material will be stockpiled in a less sensitive area for reuse if required, with non-suitable material being removed from site via lorry's and dippers - The soakaway/swales ditches will be cut following the filling and compacting of the finished car parking such that they can be kept clean and free of construction traffic. - The ditches will be approximately 900mm deep and around 500mm wide constructed using the same material as the car parking (clean imported stone). - The screening and planting will be undertaken at the end of the car parking construction. The screening will be constructed using material harvested from site and laid in compacted layers up to a maximum side slope of 1-2 metres

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Overflow parking area	• The actions above will also apply here, however the smaller new overflow car-parking will be undertaken using far less machinery in terms of size, however the same process and depths will be used.
Roads	• The new roads will be undertaken at the same time as the car-parking and again be reduced in depth of around 400mm with new clean stone being added . • The excess material will be stockpiled and reused as required. The renewal of existing roads will involve a “scrape” of around 100-200mm with new clean stone added to suit proposed site levels. • The ditches will be cut after the road has be over filled (in width) to allow the ditches to be constructed at the required depth on level to suit the new road layouts and levels.
Camping pods and lodges	• These will be delivered flat packed and will be carried by hand or by quad bike to their location in the woodland. • The camping pods and lodges will have a stone base with timber runners to house the pods on top. • The levels works will involve limited excavation and as such that the stone base will be finished to around 150mm above existing ground levels. The base will be surrounded in a timber edge.

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Chalets	- The chalets will be delivered flat packed and assembled on site. - There will be a 300-400 cut to the footprint of the Chalets and then up filled to around 750mm to form the raft foundations, which the surrounding areas up filled/reduced as required.
Shower block	- The shower block will be constructed on-site as a timber framed building with all materials delivered directly to build location by lorry. - This will be a raft foundation and the footprint of the block will be reduced to around 750mm to allow the raft and a stone blanket to be constructed.
Utilities	- Excavate service trenches, typically 1100 mm deep and 500mm wide for laying of cable ducts and water pipes which will be backfilled with arisings. - Low light way finding bollards and power feeder boxes will also be installed on site.
Trail maintenance yard	- The ground is already covered in hard-core and the existing bike wash area will remain for tool wash down. Therefore, there are no real groundwork's needed. - The existing centre building will shelter the view from the west and the bank behind the building from the South and East. A fence is required is required to screen views from the North of the yard.
Free Standing Drainage	- The swales will be cut after the finished levels have been established measuring approximately 750mm deep and 750mm wide. These will be excavated with a small machine to ensure minimum disturbance to the surrounding woodland. - The cesspit will be undertaken at the same time as the car-parking plateaus to avoid double handling. The foul drainage running to the cesspit will be undertaken with a very small machine to limit disturbance to the woodland. Some sections of the work will be undertaken by hand. The drainage line will be around 450mm to 900mm below existing levels.
Landscape works	- Clear site (where required) - Treat with herbicide (where required) - Plant feathered and standard trees in pits.

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	• Planting of shrub and tree whips/transplants • Maintenance (5 years)
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Table 4.3: Overview of likely construction activities

Construction Vehicles

- 4.3.3 The exact number of construction vehicles is not yet known. To minimise the number of construction vehicles entering and leaving the site, the site-wide cut and fill strategy is based on avoiding the export of material. Construction vehicles will therefore be associated with the import of materials required to deliver the proposed development. This number will be relatively low and will be short-term in nature. It is therefore not considered that construction vehicles will have a material change on the local highway network.
- 4.3.4 All construction vehicles (including HGVs) will enter the site via the main site access direct from the A470. To manage their impact it is proposed that a Construction Traffic Management plan will be in operation. As a minimum, this will include details of the routes of construction traffic, temporary signage including the proposed location of warning signs, delivery timetables, the location of wheel washing facilities on site, staff car sharing methods and the location of the construction compound and staff parking area on the site.

4.4 Operational Details

Opening Hours

- 4.4.1 BikePark Wales's opening times are seasonal. Between April and September (Summer) the site is open and operational between 9am and 6pm (7 days a week) and some days is open until 9pm (depending on light). Between October and March (Winter) the site is open between 9am and 5pm (7 days a week).
- 4.4.2 The proposals will not alter these hours. However the addition of on site accommodation will mean that there would now be overnight visitors on the site. These visitors would be located in the accommodation area.

Development Operation

- 4.4.3 The typical activity that occurs on site is based on visitor movement. This consists of visitors arriving at the site by private vehicle, entering the visitor centre to purchase uplift passes, equipment or food and beverages, taking the uplift vehicles to the top of the bike trails and descending the trails. The process is repeated throughout the day. Other activities consist of deliveries and refuse/ recycling collection, which occur throughout the day / week as required. The proposed development would not change this, and these activities would remain the core operational activities that take place at the site. The proposed development would, however, result in overnight activity at the site in the accommodation area. This would consist of visitors using the accommodation areas for rest, to prepare food and beverages and accessing the wash facilities.

